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The Iowa Review

Volume 7
Issue 4 *Fall*

Article 22

1976

Bits and Pieces of Our Land

Marvin Bell

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Recommended Citation

Bell, Marvin. "Bits and Pieces of Our Land." *The Iowa Review* 7.4 (1976): 84-84. Web.
Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.2114>

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Bits and Pieces of Our Land / Marvin Bell

One day you will put it together
the way they do the world
in the globe shop.

Meanwhile, you can see:
the compass plant points to the barnswallow
and a piece of prairie

might edge the road. In your mind,
no state bird, no tree,
but finch and sparrow cluster

in willow, ash, or hardwood
here and there; then,
others, elsewhere.

It's not that the land can't
make up its mind
to be a place for grass or bush,

timber or rock. The land thinks
by watching you look around;
in its stopped-down time

it will become what you want it
to be, and then become
all that it wanted you to.

It is something to see:
the way it is turning us over
in your thoughts or mine.

A Goldfinch / Marvin Bell

The Baltimore oriole, seldom an Iowan,
was last thought seen to be bathing